

Climate justice education: From social movement learning to schooling

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Abstract

In recent years, the insurgent discourse of climate justice has offered an alternative to the dominant discourse of sustainable development, which has arguably constructed climate change as a global ‘post-political’ problem, with the effect of erasing its ideological features. However, even climate justice can be considered a contested term, meaning different things to different social actors. Accordingly, this chapter offers a theoretical analysis of the challenges and opportunities for a climate justice education (CJE), which prioritises the distinctive educative and epistemological contributions of *social movements*, and extends analysis of such movements, by considering how the learning they generate might inform CJE in schools. Regarding the latter, we focus on the Scottish context, both because it represents the context in which our own knowledge claims are grounded, and because the mainstreaming of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) in policy presents an ostensibly sympathetic context for exploring climate justice. We conceptualise CJE as a process of hegemonic struggle, and in doing so, consider recursive ‘engagement with’—as opposed to ‘withdrawal from’—the state (Mouffe, 2013), via schooling, to be a legitimate dimension of social movement learning.

Education must look like the society we dream of.

It must be revolutionary and transform reality.

From the Margareta Declaration on Climate Change

Introduction

The overarching aim of this chapter is to offer a theoretical analysis of the challenges and opportunities for a climate justice education (CJE), which both recognises the distinctive educative and epistemological contributions of social movements, and positions itself critically both ‘in and against’ the Scottish educational policy contexts of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Learning for Sustainability (LfS). As authors located across a constellation of educational spaces—from the informal (e.g. social movements, communities), to the formal (e.g. Scottish schools and universities)—we position this chapter as a moment in ongoing praxis, which draws on insights from our collective experience and considers the challenges and opportunities of working across such spaces whilst paying attention to matters of cognitive justice.

In order to achieve this task, we conceptualise processes of CJE as *hegemonic encounters*: since the logic of hegemony performs various conceptual functions, we begin by adumbrating this concept, and its importance in relation to CJE. This lays the foundations for the remainder of the chapter, which theorises CJE through a consideration of the relationship between social movement learning and formal schooling. As regards the former, we focus on the educational contributions of climate justice movements. Moving on, we consider how the educative potential

of social movements might be harnessed as a pedagogical resource in schools, grounding our discussion in a critical reading of the challenges and opportunities for working within the Scottish policy context.

Hegemony as a key concept for climate justice education

[C]limate change is too urgent and important to suffer ‘death by formal curriculum’
(Kagawa & Selby, 2010, p. 242).

By now, it is widely recognised by climate change educators and communicators that we are all capable of disavowing knowledge which, when confronted, generates feelings of existential discomfort. Without wishing to be overly reductive, this issue ought to be recognised as being fundamentally *ideological*, since the actions necessary to tackle climate change are literally unthinkable within any educational space circumscribed by the ideational limits of extractivist neoliberal capitalism (Klein, 2014). In other words, public concern over climate change consistently comes second to propping up what David Harvey (2010) calls the state-corporate nexus, whose health is hypostasised as the health of the entire body politic. The best available empirical evidence unequivocally tells us that increasing scientific certainty has not led to increased public concern (Ratter and von Storch, 2012, p. 374). In fact, in a landmark study, Scruggs and Benegal (2012), drawing on aggregate public opinion trends from all EU countries and the US, found that decreased concern about, and *belief in*, climate change from 2008 was most strongly determined by worsening economic conditions. The authors hypothesised that citizens disavow climate change knowledge when they see economic growth and recovery as being at odds with taking action on climate. In this context, climate justice (and the associated

concept of ‘just transition’ away from fossil fuels) represents an attempt to provide a politically credible narrative whereby action on climate isn’t perceived by ordinary struggling people to further compound their material difficulties.

An understanding of hegemony must therefore be front and centre in any process of CJE, because it furnishes us with a vocabulary which allows us to understand that the problem of climate change “has a lot less to do with the mechanics of solar power than the politics of human power” (Klein, 2014, pp. 23-25). The challenge, therefore, is to analyse the roots of these dynamics, which are always partly educational. Gramsci (1971) viewed the institutions of civil society, including schools, as arenas of intellectual work and political learning, through which political alliances are formed. He understood hegemony as a ‘war of position’, meaning a slow cultural process through which elites attempt to fabricate consent through linking their particular interests with the fragmentary ‘common sense’ of different, often disparate, groups. Such ideological settlements, frequently fragile and always unfinished, are often necessarily protected by the coercive armour of political society, including legal institutions, the police and the military.

Nevertheless, the process of establishing connections of equivalence between particular communities and their interests (who come to see these interests collectively reflected in the particular interests of elites) is a precarious one, requiring both cognitive and affective investment. Social movements can, and do, disrupt and rearrange these links through social mobilisations that highlight and target both cognitive and affective weaknesses in the bonds between groups that hold a particular ideological edifice together. Public intellectual Naomi

Klein (2014, p. 8) has recently argued that a discourse of climate justice holds the potential to dislocate the fatally compromised vision of climate action under neoliberalism, and realign particular interests under a shared vision of the future, whereby tackling climate change delivers positive social change and galvanises community building:

[T]hrough conversations with others in the growing climate justice movement, I began to see all kinds of ways that climate change could become a catalysing force for positive change—how it could be the best argument progressives have ever had to demand the rebuilding and reviving of local economies; to reclaim our democracies from corrosive corporate influence; to block harmful new free trade deals and re-write old ones; to invest in starving public infrastructure like mass transit and affordable housing; to take back ownership of essential services like energy and water; to remake our sick agricultural system into something much healthier; to open borders to migrants whose displacement is linked to climate impacts ; to finally respect Indigenous land rights—all of which would help to end grotesque levels of inequality within our nations and between them. And I started to see signs—new coalitions and fresh arguments—hinting at how, if these various connections were more widely understood, the urgency of the climate crisis could form the basis of a powerful mass movement, one that would weave all these seemingly disparate issues into a coherent narrative.

If this is seen as an educational task, then we claim that the ideological impact of such a movement needs to extend far beyond social movement constituencies, and into schools (as well as further, higher and community-based educational institutions) through a recursive engagement with state power. Below, we go on to elaborate on how schools are key sites of hegemonic struggle in this sense.

Creating a ‘reservoir of sentiments’ for mobilisation: CJE and the state

Knowledge claims about climate justice can partly be attributed to a heterogeneous movement of movements for global justice (Jamison, 2010). Following Klein’s optimistic reading above, the frame of climate justice could potentially act as a galvanising force, a nodal point, around which a movement of movements might articulate a counter-hegemonic position. However, as environmental sociologist Jamison argued in 2010, the heterogeneous nature of the ‘movement of movements’, alongside its anti-statist intellectual influences, have led to only modest success in this regard. We are tempted to say that not much momentum has been gathered in the intervening period. Jamison (*ibid.*, p. 817) suggested that the self-identifying climate justice movement has inherited organisational knowledge favouring horizontalism, which has, in turn, been influenced by Hardt and Negri’s (2004) political philosophy of the ‘Multitude’. Whereas the theory of hegemony sees the construction of ‘the people’ (through the educational work of ‘translating’ equivalences between particular struggles) as the central task of radical politics (Laclau, 2010), the ‘Multitude’ describes an “internally different, multiple social subject”, whose actions are only related through their objective subjection to capitalist norms of (re)production (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p. 100). As such it offers a political philosophy of immanence, which posits a globally networked, technologically mediated ‘Multitude.’ Sovereignty shifts towards biopolitical (re)production, thus rendering irrelevant the state and its various institutions (including, presumably, schools) since, “under the new post-fordist forms of production characterised by the centrality of immaterial labour, capitalists ... have become parasites who simply appropriate the general intellect, without playing any positive role” (Mouffe, 2013, p. 71).

The upshot of this position is, we argue, a problematic favouring of cultural authenticity over efficacy, with respect to the learning and knowledge generated by climate justice movements. Hegemony, on the other hand, favours an approach of ‘radical negativity’, which recognises that an insurgent discourse of climate justice and its ensemble of demands, can always be “appropriated by the existing system so as to satisfy them in a way that neutralizes their subversive potential” (ibid., p. 73). Arguably, we already see hints of this dynamic in the different interpretations of climate justice by activists in the Global North and South, as well as the way in climate justice has been incorporated into carbon markets and international development discourses (Lohmann, 2008). From a position of hegemonic politics, this implies a recursive strategic ‘engagement with’ rather than ‘withdrawal from’ the state (ibid.). If we understand social movements both cognitively and affectively as types of what Zald (2000, p. 3) calls “ideologically structured action” (that is action “shaped by ideological concerns—belief systems defending and attacking current social relations and the social system”), then we can extend the study of the ideational and educational impact of climate justice movements into the classroom. As Zald (ibid., p. 9) explains:

The schools teach hegemonic ideologies. Movements of any duration breach the curriculum as adherents who are educators reshape the curriculum. The parts of movement ideologies that achieve high consensus in the population are especially likely to become part of the explicit curriculum, and even more conflictual versions of the ideology are more likely to enter the curriculum in schools catering to the part of the population that is especially drawn to the ideology ... The school curriculum, in conjunction with family, community and media, contributes to the spread of a movement ideology far beyond the initial group of cadre and activists. Put another way, changes in the curriculum are an outcome of social movements; in

turn, socialization in school helps to create the reservoir of sentiments that are mobilizable at later stages of a movement.

In the most general sense, understanding CJE as hegemonic encounter therefore implies an epistemological commitment to the mutual co-imbrication of education and politics, such that one is irreducible to the other. Specifically, if a normative dimension is necessary (but not sufficient) to distinguish education from mere learning, then we must concede that educational institutions work to secure cognitive and affective investment in particular worldviews. We might call this the *objectively hegemonic* function of education, and it arguably operates in all contexts, including LfS and climate change education. However, we are interested in making LfS an *explicitly hegemonic* affair. That is to say, we are interested in the ways in which educators and learners can collectively render visible the material interests, social relations and structures of feeling, which often tacitly shape ‘common sense’ representations of climate change-related issues within mainstream educational spaces. Since, at its most straightforward, climate justice is about unjust distributions of the burdens and benefits resulting from a hydrocarbon economy, CJE is a useful starting point.

Yet, the very discourse of climate justice itself must be recognised as being the contested stake of hegemonic encounters between different social actors such as grassroots activists, policy makers, governments, NGOs, business lobby, workers’ unions and the UN (Lohmann, 2008; Jamison, 2010; Scandrett *et al.*, 2012; Scandrett, 2016). The discourse of climate justice cannot be considered to be ‘post-political’ in the sense that the mainstream discourse of ‘sustainable development’ can be (Sklair, 2001)—specifically the construction of undifferentiated responsibility and the erasure of any contradiction between the imperatives of capital

accumulation and climate action. However, like any discourse, its dominant meaning at a given moment, in a given social formation, is contingent upon the ways in which particular groups seek to elevate their *particular* articulations of climate justice as *universal* (Butler, 2000; Laclau, 2000). At a general level, grasping this relationship between the particular and the universal is essential to understanding how hegemonic processes work: universal categories are the product of political struggle, whereby the particular values, norms, claims and interests embodied and performed by particular social actors appear to transcend their own standpoints. Education functions in such contexts to provide not only cognitive frameworks, but affective commitments to such frameworks, that provide vocabularies of motive for why the interests of one group are in the best interests of everyone, as well as the expulsion of those ‘others’ whose interests and identities are not easily subsumed. Although this dynamic can be described as discursive, the success of particular groups in contingently universalizing a political category, such as action on climate change, cannot be adequately understood as the outcome of language games—as the simple metonymic and relativistic sliding of meaning (Howarth, 2000). Instead, we must grasp that even the dominant meaning of *climate justice* as an educational construct or policy discourse is, to a large extent, the product of the ways in which power dynamics of gender, racialization and class intersect to: 1) define categories/scales of analysis and political frontiers between actors; (2) shape the terms of participation by both constructing certain groups and populations as passive objects, rather than active shapers, of ‘just’ climate policy, and policing the boundaries of legitimate and illegitimate expressions of citizen action.

In relation to the first point, Scandrett (2016, p. 479) has recently illustrated how in Scotland the discourse of climate justice is politically framed “in terms of the relationship between North and

South and the histories of colonialism of and solidarity with the people of the South”. More specifically:

The Scottish Government’s Climate Justice Fund provides seed funds for development projects in the South (primarily in Malawi, with which Scotland has a strong historical relationship), using public funds to leverage private capital investments into development projects that promote adaptation and resilience to climate change. At the launch of the Fund, the Scottish Government came under criticism from some who were otherwise supporting the initiative, for failing to meet its own ambitious targets for carbon dioxide emission reductions and continuing to support the fossil fuel industry at home. (ibid.)

We might then argue that this ‘North South’ framing obfuscates corporate-state collusion, whereby the Scottish state continues to rely on the transnational capital investment in the hydrocarbon industry in order to secure economic growth. Simply put, this international development framing, which, whilst re-distributive, doesn’t do much to challenge the class project of neoliberalism and its entanglement with racialised regimes of resource expropriation (Fraser, 2016). On the other hand, protest movements such as the Camp for Climate Action (CCA) have, over the past decade or so, sought to render such dynamics visible to the public through assembling autonomous camps at power stations, airports, and financial institutions such as the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS). This has applied brief moments of pressure to parts of the system that are least coherent to highlight ‘the wider web of communities of interest directly involved in maintaining and profiting from capitalism’s destruction of ecosystems, landscapes, homes and livelihoods’ (CCA 2010, p. 8). Such actions are counter-hegemonic insofar as they are able to disrupt dominant meanings of ‘climate action’ and their assumptions about the

passive limits of citizen agency (e.g. paying tax, ‘behaving’ in green ways etc.). They are also educative to the wider public insofar as they highlight policy contradictions (between climate policy and economic, energy, transport, food policy etc.) which, in turn, disrupt ‘neoliberal public pedagogy’ that fosters and secures cognitive and affective investment in a narrative that equates the particular interests of the transnational capitalist class (corporate profit) and the ‘national interest’ (Graham and Luke, 2011, p. 117). But climate-oriented movements are also educative by simultaneously rendering visible a number of other issues, not least the social organization of power that is deployed in such moments to police the boundaries of what is legitimate citizen action (McGregor and Crowther, 2016). As Lohmann (2008) argues, the direct contribution of grassroots movements to the reduction of carbon emissions is rendered invisible by regimes of calculation that are designed to make greenhouse gas emissions fungible.

To reiterate, such actions cannot be said to be counter-hegemonic unless ephemeral and horizontal outbursts of action engage with, rather than withdrawing from, state policies and institutions (Mouffe, 2013). Although formal curriculum can *learn from* social movements, we ought to recognise that social movement constituencies have much to learn from interventions which test the cultural (that is to say cognitive *and* affective) purchase of their ideational work in formal educational spaces. In other words, we are interested in the challenges and opportunities that exist when we push what can tentatively be called the ‘dialectic’ between social movement learning and schooling. This is also a sociologically valuable goal to the extent that the literature on social movement learning has paid very little attention to the efficacy of grassroots knowledge producing practices in educational spaces.

Cognitive justice, affective justice and translation

Jamison (2010, p. 820) has argued that the efficacy of climate justice knowledge claims will rest on their ability to foster what he calls a “hybrid imagination”, whereby “movement intellectuals” are successful in creating spaces where “scientists, engineers, and citizens can come together to learn from each other and bring their different kinds of knowledge into fruitful combinations.” However, we argue that this epistemological ‘hybridity’ cannot be not merely disciplinary, but must address the “coloniality of knowledge and power” by “learning from the South” (de Sousa Santos *et al.*, 2008, p. xiv).

This suggests that, as educators, we ought to recognise that there can be no climate justice without “cognitive justice” (de Sousa Santos *et al.*, 2008). Cognitive justice involves moving from the ‘monoculture’ of Eurocentric epistemology to a non-relativistic ‘ecology’ of knowledge producing practices. A key concept in such educational work is ‘translation’, meaning the conversion of “incommensurability into difference, a difference enabling mutual intelligibility among the different projects of social emancipation (ibid., p. xi).” Writing on the need to re-politicise sustainability education, Sund and Öhman (2014, p. 646) helpfully relate this back to the relationship between the particular and the universal—a key dynamic in the theory of hegemony: drawing on the work of Butler (2000), they argue that “[i]n the act of translation, the one who has been excluded from the universal concept will haunt the concept until it changes.” Concretely, this means that CJE ought not to abandon universal claims, but recognise that they are always contingent, stained by particularity, and ‘haunted’ by the exclusions that constitute the closure of any discourse.

We might then draw a comparison between the movement from ‘incommensurability’ to ‘mutual intelligibility, and what Mouffe (2005, p. 102) terms the movement from ‘antagonism’ to ‘agonism’, where “[a]ntagonism is a struggle between enemies, while agonism is a struggle between adversaries.” In drawing this comparison, we are, in fact, moving towards the reiteration of a crucial point for CJE: the educational act of translation (between different communities of struggle or between movements and schools) is as much to do with what we might clumsily term ‘affective justice’ as it is about ‘cognitive justice.’ An ‘agonistic’ curriculum would have to recognise the affective repertoires of ‘adversaries’ as legitimate, and this involves establishing “affect as a site and resource of political learning and struggle” (Amsler, 2011, p. 58). The implications of this are not easy to draw out, but we have already hinted above at what this might entail, for example the analysis of how, in any educational space, desire, hope, happiness, anger, frustration, disgust, embarrassment and so on, are keyed to ideological commitments. In the context of climate change, it involves recognition that “conformism, anger and the desire for positive emotions are therefore within the range of possible responses to critique” (Amsler, 2011, p. 52), especially where attributions of privilege and responsibility are brought to the fore. It involves finding space to address the ways in which educational spaces work to silence those thought of as being ‘too wilful’ (Ahmed, 2014), and how wilfulness and desire are harnessed and channelled in particular directions. Below, we move on to develop this line of thought, focusing specifically on climate justice movements.

The climate justice movement as an educational phenomenon

Climate justice and social movements

As various authors in this volume have described, climate justice is a varied and disputed concept, often deriving from policy discourses (e.g. Mary Robinson Foundation) or liberal contractarian philosophy (e.g. Schlosberg 2008, 2013) somewhat distant from the climate justice movements that have a vested interest in validating such definitions. What is understood to be the climate justice movement (CJM) is itself subject to dispute, including the extent to which we can include diverse movements, organisations and individuals which either claim to be part of the CJM or else such claim has been made on their behalf. Candidates include the self-named CJM which developed the declarations of Cochabamba and Margarita, and the people's movements, social movement organisations and more radical NGOs which constitute this CJM (e.g. La Via Campesina, Focus on the Global South, Global Justice Now, Friends of the Earth International). However, many more mainstream NGOs, policy think tanks, academic institutions and state enterprises which advocate climate justice (for example see Christian Aid, Mary Robinson Foundation, Glasgow Caledonian University Centre for Climate Justice and Scottish Government Climate Justice Fund) have been included under the umbrella of CJM. The term is also claimed by autonomous and direct action groups such as the Camp for Climate Action (CCA). Some authors have included action groups and environmental justice campaigns focused against locally unwanted land uses which happen to be part of the hydrocarbon industry (for example coal mines, oil pipelines, fracking developments and petrochemical factories) irrespective of whether the groups themselves welcome such a label (Bond and Dorsey 2010, Scandrett 2016). Still others have included an even broader category including: climate refugees; communities mobilising around mitigation and adaptation efforts; social groups disproportionately affected by climate damaging or emission reduction policies; and

governments in most affected countries and crucially for work with young people in schools, future generations.

Above, we defined social movements as forms of ideologically structured action, in order to guard against their reification. We would, moreover, agree with Cox and Nilsen (2014) that social movements should be understood as fundamental animating forces in the process of struggle between social groups seeking to defend or enhance, redistribute, or prevent redistribution of, access to limited resources, whether material and symbolic. Therefore, the underlying social processes make possible, generate, constrain and are changed by social movements, both from below, amongst those making claims to justice by collectively challenging injustice, and from above, amongst groups seeking to perpetuate or enhance privilege and obfuscate the injustices on which this privilege is based. The social-ecological process of climate change generates and constricts movements from above which protect—as well as from below which challenge—the interests of capital and social privilege. The resulting ‘war of position’ leads to periodic conflicts orientated around ‘truce lines’ between these movements, and such conflicts become essential sources of curriculum which can help make the hegemonic encounter explicit.

Theorising social movement learning (SML)

Social movements have been identified as a rich source of learning beyond the formal organisation of education such as schools. Biesta (2012) makes the point that what is central to learning is change and the capacity to influence how it is valued and perceived. However, not all change is valued as learning. This is pertinent to social movement learning and action, which

involves contesting what is valued by creating new frames of meaning, at the micro level of the individual and their interactions, as well as the macro level of society and beyond (see Scandrett et al, 2010). Unlike schooling, social movement learning has no fixed disciplinary curriculum categories; instead, their educative potential needs to be understood broadly in relation to context and purpose, relations of power and social action.

The educative nature of social movements is, for Eyerman and Jamison (1991) their defining characteristic: a process of what they call ‘cognitive praxis’, emerging from “dynamic interaction between different groups and organisations.” However, ‘cognitive praxis’ remains an educational misnomer for this process to the extent that it imagines political learning to be a process of rational public deliberation, whereby passions are consigned to the private sphere. It is important to highlight that movements often arise because of feelings of injustice, anger at how things are, fear that things cannot go on as they are, hope and passion for living differently to the dominant hegemonic frames of meaning and valuation. Therefore social movements are vehicles for ‘educating desire’ (Crowther and Shaw, 1997). Utopian thinking, as E.P. Thompson (1976, 97) states is ‘to teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way’.

Movements are inescapably normative projects in that some seek to bolster dominant values, harbour residual values of the past or, profess emergent values (Williams 1977). Emergent movements can, in some cases, be incorporated and lose their radical potential in order to circumvent their threat to the dominant hegemony (e.g. carbon trading is used as a means of commodifying pollution in response to climate change movements), or else they may remain

outside, alternative and ultimately irrelevant to hegemonic struggle (arguably, the fate of many rejectionist, self-sufficient communities or anarchist direct action movements). However, emergent movements may also retain their oppositional challenge too, as they engage in hegemonic encounter with movements from above. These tensions between incorporation by, exodus from, and opposition to, the social, economic and political interests supporting hydrocarbon neoliberalism, can be educationally generative for climate justice activists, and the wider public.

Learning in social movements can occur by merely involving the type of instrumental skill set any organisation needs to possess. However, to survive and prosper social movements need to foster ‘learning loops’ (systematic processes of learning through reflection) to further their organisational capacity and the goals of the movement. And to function at another level, movement learning needs to address the ontological challenge of what it means to be human. Learning for action might involve learning how to relate the movement’s aims to everyday life and how to interpret or communicate values and beliefs textually, or artistically, using a full range of media, to different audiences which the movement seeks to influence. These are particular challenges for CJMs, since this ontological challenge must be capable of spanning the felt experience of personal, or local, injustices not just to larger social structures, but to the so-called Anthropocene.

In summary, learning for social movement occurs at multiple layers of analytical complexity, including transitions between stages of a ‘social movement process’ (Cox and Nilsen 2014). For example, the experience of failing to stop a fracking development through mobilising around a

planning inquiry, can result in a deeper knowledge of the role such administrative processes play in reflecting the interests of powerful groups through a rhetorical veneer of democratic participation and objective fairness. Movements can, through such learning processes, develop an awareness of their own ‘historicity’ (Touraine, 1977), meaning their role in the self-transformation of society. However, it should always be emphasised that this is a task of hegemonic articulation. For example, localised anti-fracking struggles may be driven by a variety of motivations, and a discourse of climate justice may remain too spatially, temporally and conceptually abstract to have any affective resonance for those involved without space for sustained educational work. As such, a key task of the public pedagogy of climate change-related movements is to generate narratives establishing relations of equivalence with other social movements, both contemporaneously and historically (McGregor, 2015).

What is distinctive about movements, from other voluntary bodies which provide learning experiences, is that they involve social action which is also educative and can be characterised as a form of messy learning. By messy learning we mean ‘the unordered, fragmented, often unfinished, incidental and episodic learning’ constituting the ‘rich but invariably partial mosaic of social movement learning (Crowther and Martin, 2010, no pagination).’ This is a form of learning through which activists take into account the complexities of ‘real life’ circumstances to put theory into practice, respond to unexpected reactions and take into account a range of context specific considerations that authentic circumstances generate. What they learn is, of course, often unpredictable. They may learn more about the aims of the movement, its strategy and values, but they may also learn about the ways of power, or about themselves as activists. Participation in

social movements is a relational experience and this is central to it as a generator of messy learning.

Learning *from* social movements refers to the wider public learning and education that movements generate. As a movement becomes more powerful its repertoire of cultural artefacts can be assimilated into the wider cultural field, to contribute towards a new structure of feeling. Movements can be responsible for generating a whole range of public pedagogies through books, journalism, television, film, photography, art, poetry, social media and so on. The public pedagogy of nascent movements can be more difficult to identify, as transforming public discourse may require more time to become visible. However, it is in making visible new ways of thinking and feeling – creating an alternative hegemonic frame of meaning that has wide public appeal – that makes social movement learning, and in particular learning in, for and from CJM, an important resource for professional educators in a variety of settings and educational institutions.

Opportunities for developing curriculum from and with social movements

Returning to the context of climate justice movements, a mass rejection of COP 15 (15th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC) in Copenhagen in 2009 marked a crucial turning point, whereupon a variety of different activist practices sought to disrupt its hegemonic frame and produce alternative knowledge claims based on analyses of ecological debt and social injustice. This included confrontational and creative direct action (of groups such as ‘Climate Justice Action’, ‘Reclaim the Power’ and ‘Shut It Down’), as well as parallel civil society summits such as Klimaforum09, which itself could be conceived as an informal adult learning space consisting of workshops,

exhibitions, performances and so on (Harrebye, 2011). Taken as a whole, COP15 could provide valuable case study material for secondary school teachers on the relationship between climate change and learning through social action, focusing on the different tactics and approaches employed to question the hegemonic framing of ‘climate action.’

Notably, a collection of protest groups convened at Cochabamba in Venezuela to address the crisis (Bond and Dorsey 2009). The declaration they produced (and its sequel produced in 2014 in Margarita, also Venezuela), along with the context in which they were generated, provide invaluable curricular materials. The Cochabamba Declaration constitutes a 4000 word ‘People’s Agreement’ on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, accompanied by a global plan of action aimed at the 2010 COP 16 in Cancun, and many other associated documents. The Agreement clearly connects the climate crisis with capitalism and its associated structures (commodification, limitless growth, patriarchy, militarism etc.) and confronts the UNFCCC process for treating “climate change as a problem limited to the rise in temperature without questioning the cause, which is the capitalist system”. The Agreement posits a stark choice: “Humanity confronts a great dilemma: to continue on the path of capitalism, depredation, and death, or to choose the path of harmony with nature and respect for life.” Counterpoised to capitalist climate change is an alternative system of economic and social organisation based on the ‘Rights of Mother Earth’. The slogan adopted by many parts of the movement encapsulates this approach to climate justice as “System Change not Climate Change”.

Although in a less accessible form, further important curricular content can be developed from examples of local conflicts related to the fossil fuel industry. Whilst many of these local action

groups do not identify themselves with a climate justice movement, there are valuable lessons to learn from including within the CJM all such local responses in opposition to the cradle-to-grave process of hydrocarbon industry development, from investment and extraction, through distribution and manufacturing, to consumption and the waste stream which is directly contributing to the enhanced greenhouse effect. A source of curriculum can be derived from this conflict between local action and hydrocarbon capitalism. Direct engagement with such local action groups, campaigns or, where available, climate camps or direct action protests are a significant potential source of curriculum. It is through such engagement, direct or indirect (via the many protest materials, websites, videos, blogs etc.), where acts of translation occur: the challenge of making connections between narratives of local resistance in order to construct a discourse of resistance to hydrocarbon capitalism in the form of the climate justice movement is an important source of curricular development.

Other, more tangential, parts of the climate justice movement provide challenging opportunities for curricular engagement, especially aspects which highlight social contradictions of tackling climate change without addressing the structural causes of injustice. This is particularly significant in issues related to poverty. For example, campaigns on fuel poverty might expose how distributing domestic energy (largely gas or electricity) through market mechanisms systematically generates inequality. Infrastructure designed on the basis of cheap fossil fuels means that those with the least economic leverage are most dependent on this infrastructure and therefore most exposed as the market price increases. Market mechanisms, such as carbon trading or state interventions in fuel prices, without addressing the infrastructure of cheap oil capitalism, will increase fuel poverty, and campaigners risk being left lobbying for cheaper fossil

fuel. Thus, fuel poverty campaigners who focus on infrastructure (such as improved standards for public housing stock) rather than fuel prices because of an awareness of climate change, also constitute a CJM source of the curriculum.

Many more such examples might be developed, if space permitted. However, the key point is that the weakness of much discourse on climate justice often arises from attempts to reify the concept as a fixed definition or policy objective, rather than a dynamic process where movements expose conflicts in deeper socio-economic and socio-ecological systems. An analysis of the CJM which neglects these wider systemic processes can reinforce that reification.

By way of summary, we claim that CJ movements (both those which emerged from the failure of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen, and the broader CJM generated from contradictions throughout the cradle-to-grave of hydrocarbon capitalist industrial process) provide a rich source of curricular resources which challenge this reification that often prevents education on climate, and LfS more generally, from breaking out of the presumption that neoliberal capitalism is here to stay. In this context, to say that there is no climate justice without cognitive and affective justice is to claim that it is only a useful counter-hegemonic concept to the extent that it recognises the praxis of diverse communities of struggle, and, further, that is capacious enough to be recognised *by* these communities, who draw equivalences between their particular struggles under this name (Laclau, 2000). As argued above, this ‘war of position’ is fundamentally educational, involving acts of democratic learning, whereby solidarity is developed through acts of ‘translation’ (de Sousa Santos *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, to make CJE *explicitly* hegemonic is to recognise that this war of position is vertical, as much as it is horizontal, insofar as we must find ways to

translate these insights in formal educational spaces. Below, we consider the challenges and opportunities for this, by way of exploring the politics of policy in Scotland, particularly LfS.

Learning for Sustainability: The current educational policy context in Scotland

LfS became part of Scottish educational policy and discourse following the publication of the One Planet Schools Ministerial Advisory Group report (titled ‘Learning for Sustainability’) in December 2012 (Scottish Government, 2012)¹. This report introduced a model of LfS as an organising concept for three areas – Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship Education and Outdoor Learning - with a singular overarching aim to develop:

... a whole school approach that enables the school and its wider community to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable and more equitable future. (Scottish Government, 2012, xx)

This internationally significant development—which recognises the need to develop curricular links between schools and their wider communities—‘builds on a number of factors such as: a greater awareness of the scale of our impacts and significance of ‘sustainability’; ...developments by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), the ‘third sector’ and academia; a range of UN and other international initiatives; and changes in government policy focus’ (Higgins and Christie, 2017). In short, the term LfS can be understood as offering an ostensibly holistic pedagogical approach that seeks to build the values, skills, and knowledge necessary to develop practices within schools, communities, and within teacher education, that accord with the collective aim of taking action for a sustainable future. It is woven into the warp and weft of

educational policy in a number of ways, for example professional standards and self-evaluation frameworks.

On the face of it then, Scottish schools sit within an internationally recognised policy context, offering learning opportunities to address the various dimensions of climate (in)justice generated through ‘messy’ democratic learning taking place in the wider community. However, we know that the teachers who implement new approaches “may not construct the same philosophical understanding of the reform philosophy as the creators of the model” (Wallace and Priestley, 2011, p. 361). This is particularly the case with ‘sustainability’, an object of hegemonic struggle *par excellence*, in that it ‘floats’ between a commitment to social justice and neoliberal commitments to ‘sustainable’ economic growth and post-welfare forms of entrepreneurial citizen agency, in which local community action steps in to replace a hollowed out public sector. In this sense, sustainability can be thought of as a ‘vehicular idea’, that is, ‘an idea which can reabsorb opposition, evolve with the times, and move across sites’ (McKenzie et al, 2015, p. 320).

Although this presents certain challenges for professional practice, such tensions made explicit are a rich form of curriculum, and offer opportunities to legitimise climate justice knowledge claims. However, as argued above, this can only happen if teachers are prepared, and able, to engage with social mobilisations that make these tensions concrete (for example by highlighting concrete manifestations of policy contradiction between climate policy and transport, labour rights, food and agriculture, energy etc.).

In the long-term, one practical consequence for ‘upstream’ teacher education, in relation to LfS, is to mainstream an understanding of ‘policy as discourse’ (Bacchi, 2000, p. 48), the premise of

which is that ‘it is inappropriate to see governments as responding to ‘problems’ that exist ‘out there’ in the community. Rather ‘problems’ are ‘created’ or ‘given shape’ in the very policy proposals that are offered as ‘responses’.

Far from implying a retreat to negative critique, such critical faculties are urgently required in order to create the conditions for acknowledging ‘the enormity of the challenge, the uncertainties it brings, and discover[ing] and develop[ing] appropriate strategies and disciplines for living, now’ (Marshall, Coleman and Reason, 2011, p.4). We need to consider how educational policy frames the ‘sustainability’ agenda in formal education, how young people are invited to respond, how political and open-ended those responses can be, and consider how comfortable teachers and school leaders are with inviting diverse affective responses, which encourage the exploration of antagonisms as educationally generative, and create space for political and active citizenship, which engage directly or indirectly, with social movements and diverse communities of struggle.

The challenge offered by LfS is internationally significant as the policy does urge us to deeply question and imagine new ways of being, doing and thinking. Griffiths and Murray (2017, p. 45) in reference to LfS policy, recognise this potential and suggest that if ‘students are to learn to engage enough with the world to develop informed, critical heartfelt judgements, a pedagogy is required that inspires, persuades and encourages them to pay attention and to re-think their outlook on the world’. Developing a pedagogical approach that not only creates space for this inquiry but encourages the messiness and open-ended thinking required when faced with the ‘the chance of understanding something new, something unforeseen by us’ (Arendt, 1961, p. 196) is demanding, uncomfortable and, in some cases, troubling. Yet, as we have outlined above, it is

precisely this ‘messiness’ that marks social movement learning. Thus, the praxis of CJMs offers an opportunity to model the challenges involved in LfS, through providing authentic exemplars of collective democratic learning, which necessitate risk, dissent and awkwardness. Of course, the aim of this cannot be to merely indoctrinate students into social movement ideologies, and this means finding space and time to explore emotionally ambivalent reactions through what Spivak calls ‘uncoercive rearrangements of desire’, whilst nonetheless recognising that ‘there can be no education if there is no shoving and pushing’ (2014, p. 80).

Towards a conclusion: Considerations for CJE in schools

Without claiming to provide any straightforward roadmap, we conclude below by clarifying the main considerations that we believe are necessary to shape the development of CJE within and through LfS policy in Scottish schools.

Arguably, although Scottish educational policy emphasises the importance of experiential learning through active citizenship in communities, ‘community’ has arguably been constructed as a site of consensus rather than plurality and difference (Biesta, 2008). Framed within this context, climate justice is interesting because it is positioned against facile constructions of citizenship, through which individuals act locally, as part of a wider global community of undifferentiated responsibility. Climate justice claims are historically and geographically contingent (Jamison, 2010, p. 818), and the disputes they create are generally disputes over appropriate geographical, political, economic and generational boundaries and relations (Walker, 2012). CJE must challenge teacher educators, teachers and students to understand how these

boundaries of legitimate citizenship are constituted, negotiated and challenged, thus placing citizenship learning, as an aspect of LfS, in a more overtly political context.

Current LfS policy offers an opportunity to develop ‘open-ended pedagogy’—educational spaces that create and foster alternatives to the mono-cultured, mainstreamed thinking that invite everyone to be involved but only require us (teachers and learners) to take note without provoking us to pay focused critical attention, nor to become who we are not yet (Griffiths and Murray, 2017). Developing a similar line of analysis, Sund & Ohman (2012, 649) argue that ‘sustainability education’ can become an explicitly hegemonic affair to the extent that it offers strategies and opportunities for students to reframe antagonisms as agonism—developing the affective, as well as cognitive, capacity for ‘conflictual consensus’ (Mouffe, 2005). This is not an easy task, nor a comfortable space to operate within. In fact, it challenges many of the assumptions tacitly shaping what ‘responsible citizenship’—a central tenet of Scottish CfE—is imagined to be. As education theorist Biesta (2011) argues, our vision of CJE poses a fundamental *challenge to* the ‘socialisation conception of democratic learning and education’, since the (re)making of political subjectivities is constitutive of democratic politics, not an *a priori* condition for participation in it. Perhaps counter-intuitively, such pedagogical approaches must see universal claim-making as the very condition of democratic politics. However, as Laclau (2000) and Butler (2000) convincingly argue, universal claims (including those aspiring to climate justice) represent the contingent outcome of acts of translation between actual political struggles, not transcendental knowledge claims imposed by above.

Undoubtedly, LfS provides exciting opportunities for CJE, but there is a danger that such curricula might become incorporated if untethered from the knowledge claims made and produced through collective action. Within this constellation of knowledge claims, the social organisation of power may be described as *collateral* curriculum, but this does not make it *incidental* curriculum—precisely the opposite. It offers educators the opportunity to explore a fundamental insight about the relationship between the generation of knowledge and action for social change. Likewise, ‘working in and against’ the limitations of policy and practice in schools, might provide a valuable resource to systematise the ‘messy learning’ generated within and between different communities of struggle, by clarifying the ways in which young people experience, negotiate, endorse or dismiss the knowledge claims of CJMs.

¹ See Higgins and Christie (2017) for a more detailed historical perspective on this policy development.

Key points

1. Climate change education must find space to challenge the ‘neoliberal public pedagogy’ that equates the particular interests of the transnational capitalist class (corporate profit) and the ‘national interest’. Social movements can play a crucial role in this regard.
2. However much the insurgent discourse of climate justice may challenge the post-political contradictions in sustainable development discourse, its dominant meaning at a given moment, in a given social formation, is contingent upon the ways in which particular groups seek to elevate their *particular* articulations of climate justice as *universal*.
3. Climate justice education must therefore be partially about cognitive justice, meaning that debates over how the concept is framed, and by whom, is a justice issue: cognitive injustice occurs when the material and epistemological contributions of social movements are framed out of mainstream narratives.
4. Climate justice education is a process of hegemonic struggle, through which recursive engagement with the policy and practice of LfS in schools can be a legitimate dimension of social movement learning.
5. Climate justice education involves acts of ‘translation’, which are both affective and cognitive: educators require strategies for exploring the ways in which diverse emotional responses to climate change are ideologically inflected, particularly where attributions of privilege and responsibility are brought to the fore.

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